



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

**FPB POLICY  
K-09-2**

**KNOX BOX REQUIREMENTS AND  
PROCEDURE FOR ORDERING  
CFC SECTION 506**

***I. PURPOSE***

This policy is intended to provide information about Knox-keyed devices and how to obtain them.

***II. SCOPE***

This policy shall apply to all buildings or sites within the City of San Diego where it has been determined that a Knox-keyed device is needed to improve accessibility for emergency responders.

***III. OVERVIEW***

The Knox Program provides San Diego Fire-Rescue Department with a quick and easy means to access a secured building or area. It also minimizes potential costly repairs caused by forcible entry and allows the building to be re-secured quickly and easily.

***IV. DEFINITIONS***

**KNOX COMPANY:** The manufacturer/vendor of Knox boxes, cabinets, key switches, padlocks, and related accessories. This is the only company whose products can be accessed by San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

**KNOX KEY:** A key carried on all fire apparatus which enables fire crews to access any Knox device within the City of San Diego.

**KNOX BOX:** A lock box used for securely storing the keys to a gate, building, or rooms within a building.

**KNOX KEY SWITCH:** An electrical switch activated by a Knox key which opens a gate, garage door, or other electric entry door.

**Fire Prevention Bureau**

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**KNOX CABINET:** A locked data cabinet used for storing information pertinent to the operation of a building, such as Hazmat data and plant shut-down procedures. Keys to the facility can also be located within the cabinet.

**KNOX PADLOCK:** A heavy padlock openable by a Knox key.

**KEY TAG:** Attached to each key in a Knox box to identify its function.

## ***V. BACKGROUND***

When access to secured structures or areas is difficult for emergency responders, the Chief is authorized to require a Knox box or key switch to be installed in an acceptable location. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department has had a Knox Program in place for over thirty years, and cannot access lock boxes or switches manufactured by other companies.

## ***VI. HOW TO ORDER***

Once the need for a Knox box or other Knox product has been established, the customer will be given this policy and a Knox product order form with price list and ordering information. These will be given to the customer by either the Engine Company or Fire Prevention Bureau staff. This information can also be mailed to the customer upon request, or sent via by FAX or E-mail.

The customer should review this information and make a selection on the order form. If the customer needs assistance in selecting the appropriate product, he/she may contact The Knox Company and obtain the assistance of a sales representative. Once the selection has been made, the completed order form shall be submitted to the Fire Prevention Bureau, via mail, for an authorization signature along with the \$137 Installation Inspection fee. The check will be payable to the "City Treasurer". Once approved, the applicant shall send the approved order form to The Knox Company. The Knox Company will ship the order directly to the address specified on the order form.

## ***VII. INSTALLATION/LOCATION***

It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that Knox products are installed securely in an approved location and manner. Knox boxes may need to be anchored to the building with lag bolts, recessed into plaster or stucco, or welded to metal fences, posts, or gates.

One Fire-Rescue Department reflective alert decal is included with each Knox box. The decal is to be mounted on the door or door frame adjacent to the Knox box. This reflective decal alerts fire companies to the presence of a Knox box.

Knox boxes are frequently installed near the main entrance to the building at a height not to exceed **SEVEN (7) FEET ABOVE FINISHED GRADE**. This height has proven to be ideal since it enables fire crews to access the Knox box quickly without the delay of setting up a ladder. Also, seven feet is high enough to discourage the idly curious. Other locations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Knox key switches should be installed by an electrician familiar with these devices. The preferred location for mounting a key switch is at the gate control head, or adjacent to the gate or door entry key pad.

#### ***VIII. KEYS IN KNOX BOXES***

Every key placed in a Knox box shall be identified with a sturdy tag. Each set of keys shall be grouped together on a key ring. Tags and key rings may be purchased from the Knox Company at the time the Knox box is ordered. The keys being installed will be at the discretion of the customer, but they should be selected bearing in mind the access needs of responding fire companies. Some keys typically placed in Knox boxes include: MAIN ENTRANCE, GRAND MASTER, ELEVATOR CONTROL, MECHANICAL ROOM, FIRE ALARM PANEL, ELECTRICAL ROOM, AND ROOF ACCESS.

#### ***IX. LOCK UP OF KNOX BOX***

Knox boxes are shipped to the customer in the OPEN position. After the box has been installed, the customer must contact the Fire-Rescue Department to request lock-up since only the Department has a key. Fire Prevention Bureau staff will assist the customer in arranging for lock-up. All keys should be tagged and ready for placement in the Knox box upon arrival.

***Note: The customer should notify the Fire-Rescue Department whenever a building has been re-keyed so that obsolete keys in the Knox box can be replaced.***

#### ***X. TESTING OF KEY SWITCH***

After a key switch has been installed, the customer must contact Fire-Rescue Department. The local engine company will test the key switch at its earliest convenience to ensure that it works properly. The customer does not need to be present for this test. If the key switch fails to operate, the customer will be contacted to have the necessary repairs made.

***XI. NUMBER OF KEY SETS REQUIRED***

More than one set of keys is often required, especially in larger buildings. These extra sets are needed for the additional fire companies subsequently arriving at the same address. The following guidelines for number of key sets shall be followed:

Security Gate only, or	
1-2 story building:	1 set of keys
3-4 stories:	2 sets
5-8 stories:	3 sets
9 stories and above:	4 sets

Promulgated by: \_\_\_\_\_ [Signed] \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 7-28-09 \_\_\_\_\_

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